

PUBLIC INFORMATION STATEMENT
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE UPTON NY
600 AM EDT WED MAR 21 2007

...THIS WEEK IS NATIONAL FLOOD SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK...

TODAY'S TOPIC IS FLOODING AND RELATED PHENOMENA.

WHEN IT COMES TO TROPICAL CYCLONES, WIND SPEEDS DO NOT TELL THE WHOLE STORY. INTENSE RAINFALL, NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE WIND SPEED OF A TROPICAL CYCLONE, OFTEN CAUSES MORE DAMAGE. SINCE THE 1970S, INLAND FLOODING HAS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR MORE THAN HALF OF THE DEATHS ASSOCIATED WITH TROPICAL CYCLONES IN THE UNITED STATES. TYPICALLY, GREATER RAINFALL AMOUNTS AND FLOODING ARE ASSOCIATED WITH TROPICAL CYCLONES THAT HAVE A SLOW FORWARD SPEED OR STALL OVER AN AREA.

INLAND FRESHWATER FLOODS ACCOUNTED FOR MORE THAN HALF (59%) OF U.S. TROPICAL CYCLONE DEATHS OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS. RAINFALL IS TYPICALLY HEAVIER WITH SLOWER MOVING STORMS AS SLOWER MOVING TROPICAL CYCLONES ALLOW HEAVY RAIN TO PERSIST OVER A LOCATION.

IN THE PAST...HURRICANE AGNES BROUGHT MASSIVE FLOODING AS IT PASSED JUST WEST OF NEW YORK CITY BEFORE RE-CURVING TO THE WEST ACROSS CENTRAL NEW YORK STATE IN 1972 WITH 2.4 BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN DAMAGES AND 25 DEATHS IN NEW YORK STATE ALONE. AGNES WAS THE WORST NATURAL DISASTER TO HIT NEW YORK UP TO THAT TIME. IN 1999 HURRICANE FLOYD CAUSED MAJOR FLOODING ACROSS NORTHEASTERN NEW JERSEY, THE LOWER HUDSON RIVER VALLEY AND SOUTHWEST CONNECTICUT.

THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE IN UPTON NEW YORK WORKS HARD TO MONITOR AND TRACK TROPICAL CYCLONES AND PROJECT THEIR IMPACT ON OUR REGION TO HELP OUR RESIDENTS PREPARE. WE HOLD DAILY CONFERENCE CALLS WITH EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICIALS...STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES INCLUDING THOSE WHO WORK IN DISASTER RELIEF. WE ALSO HAVE THE HURRICANE HOTLINE IN OUR OFFICE...WHICH IS A DIRECT LINE TO THE TROPICAL PREDICTION CENTER'S FORECASTERS. WE ALSO WORK CLOSELY WITH OUR RIVER FORECAST CENTERS WHO MODEL THE RIVER AND STREAM FLOW IN OUR REGION...WHICH IS CRITICAL FOR FLOOD FORECASTING.

DURING WINTER...LARGE SNOW STORMS AND COLD WEATHER LEAVE MANY LOCATIONS ACROSS THE LOCAL AREA WITH A DEEP SNOW COVER AND FROZEN RIVERS. IF HEAVY RAIN AND UNUSUALLY MILD TEMPERATURES MOVE INTO A LOCATION WITH A DEEP SNOW COVER AND FROZEN RIVERS...THE RIVER ICE BREAKS UP. THIS ICE FLOATS DOWNSTREAM...OFTEN PILING UP NEAR NARROW PASSAGES...SUCH AS BRIDGES...CAUSING AN ICE JAM. WATER BACKS UP AND USUALLY OVERFLOWS THE RIVERS BANK UPSTREAM OF THE JAM...RESULTING IN FLOODING OF NEARBY HOMES AND BUSINESSES.

AN ICE JAM FLOOD CAN OCCUR QUICKLY. THE RISK OF ICE JAM FLOODING INCREASES WHEN THE AMOUNT OF ICE IN OUR AREA WATER SYSTEMS IS ABOVE NORMAL. AN ICE JAM RESTRICTS THE NATURAL FLOW OF A WATER SYSTEM. TO HELP THE PUBLIC PREPARE FOR THE POTENTIAL OF WINTER AND SPRING FLOODING, THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE IN UPTON ISSUES SPRING FLOOD POTENTIAL OUTLOOKS EVERY OTHER FRIDAY FROM JANUARY THROUGH APRIL...WHICH DETAILS CURRENT SNOWPACK...ICE AND SOIL MOISTURE. THE OUTLOOK DETERMINES THE RISK FOR WINTER AND SPRING FLOODING. THIS OUTLOOK CAN BE FOUND ON THE UPTON WEB SITE...WHICH IS WEATHER.GOV/OKX.

THE THREAT FOR WINTER/SPRING FLOODING ACROSS THE LOCAL AREA THROUGH MARCH 30, 2007, IS ABOVE NORMAL. SNOWPACK...WHICH IS A MAJOR PLAYER IN THE WINTER AND SPRING FLOOD POTENTIAL IS ABOVE NORMAL. RIVER ICE EXISTS ON PARTS OF THE WALLKILL AND HUDSON RIVERS IN THE LOWER HUDSON VALLEY.

ONCE THE SMOKE CLEARS FROM A WILDFIRE, THE DANGER IS NOT OVER. FLASH FLOODS AND DEBRIS FLOWS, OR MUDFLOWS, CAN BE ONE OF THE MOST HAZARDOUS CONSEQUENCES OF RAINFALL ON BURNED HILL SLOPES. JUST A SMALL AMOUNT OF RAINFALL ON A BURNED AREA CAN LEAD TO THESE HAZARDS. THE POWERFUL FORCE OF RUSHING WATER, SOIL, AND ROCK, BOTH WITHIN THE BURNED AREA AND DOWNSTREAM, CAN DESTROY CULVERTS, BRIDGES, ROADWAYS, AND STRUCTURES, AND CAN RESULT IN INJURY OR DEATH. THE U.S. GEOLOGICAL LANDSLIDES HAZARDS PROGRAM IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION STRIVES TO REDUCE LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY TO LANDSLIDE HAZARDS THROUGH IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING AND EFFECTIVE MITIGATION. THIS IS ACCOMPLISHED IN THREE PRIMARY WAYS: DEVELOPMENT OF IMPROVED APPROACHES FOR LANDSLIDE HAZARD ASSESSMENTS; POST-DISASTER RESPONSE; AND PUBLIC INFORMATION AND OUTREACH.

THE TOPICS THAT WE WILL FOCUS ON THE REST OF THIS WEEK ARE:
THURSDAY...FLOOD INSURANCE.
FRIDAY...FLOOD SAFETY.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON FLOOD AWARENESS WEEK USE THIS WEB SITE:

[HTTP://WWW.WEATHER.GOV/OKX/FLOODAWARENESS_WEEK.HTM](http://www.weather.gov/okx/floodawareness_week.htm)

IF YOU NEED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION...CONTACT NANCY FIGUEROA OR GARY CONTE VIA EMAIL AT NANCY.FIGUEROA@NOAA.GOV OR GARY.CONTE@NOAA.GOV.